



Information

Distance: 3.4km

Gradient: Moderate to steep

Starting Point: Weymouth Park & Ride, Mount Pleasant, Mercey Road, Weymouth DT3 5HJ

Public Transport: First Wessex provides a bus service to the Weymouth Park & Ride and Upwey railway station is an 11-minute walk to the reserve.

Accessibility: Access to the reserve is via gates and stiles. The ground may be rough and uneven in places and can be muddy underfoot depending on the time of year.

Facilities

Meadow Barn at Dorset Wildlife Trust's Lorton Meadows Conservation Centre provides an outdoor covered seating area with leaflets and maps available.

Toilets: Nearest public toilets are at Weymouth Park & Ride.

1. From the Weymouth Park & Ride, take the path along the road to a mini roundabout and continue to the next roundabout. Take the public footpath along the boundary of Two Mile Coppice until you come to the first entrance to the nature reserve.
2. Go through the first kissing gate on your left and walk along the edge of the field with Two Mile Coppice to your left, through another kissing gate and across a boardwalk. Continue to the kissing gate in the hedge line opposite. Look out for the large grassy ant hills made by yellow meadow ants.
3. Go through the kissing gate into the wooded meadow, turn right and follow the path until you see beehives on your left and a kissing gate on the right to the Lorton Meadows Conservation Centre.
4. From the Conservation Centre, walk uphill along the main access road to a kissing gate leading into a small field on the right. In the summertime, this part of the SNCI is full of plants like bird's-foot trefoil and common blue butterfly.
5. Walk downhill past the ash tree and you will come to a gate and bridge leading into the next field. In the summer months, stop and spend a minute looking for gatekeeper butterflies.
6. In the next meadow, follow the path uphill towards the woodland on the right with views of historic Lorton House on left. Flowering plants in this field include gorse and fleabane.
7. Enter the next field and follow the path along the edge of Coffin Plantation, planted over 200 years ago with beech trees. Continue into the wood, up the steps and turn right at the top.
8. At the fork in the path, continue left uphill. The woodland is more mixed here and includes oak and ash. At the top of the wood, you may notice a small brick building and bunker (kept locked) dating back to World War II. Decoy fires were lit here to draw bombers away from the town. Back out into the open, pause awhile and take in the views of Weymouth and Portland. This is the start of the 14-mile Legacy Trail to Portland Bill.
9. Walk gradually downhill through the long open meadow ahead, towards the woodland that extends down the ridge towards the reedbed. This is Horse Lynch Plantation, 200 years old and dominated by tall beech trees. Look for buzzards over the wood and marsh harriers hunting over the reeds.
10. Look for an open pathway that skirts alongside the plantation to the right. You will see along the path many younger trees which were planted in 2010 by local schools, community groups and Dorset Wildlife Trust volunteers.

11. Carry on along this path as it turns right, then head downhill and take in the spectacular views. To the east is White Horse Hill with its chalk carving. To the west is Lodmoor, Weymouth and Portland.
12. Further downhill, take a detour left for the Community Orchard. Pick an apple if ripe. The trees were planted in 2016 by Bincombe Valley School pupils and Dorset Wildlife Trust volunteers.
13. At this point, turn right and follow the path through Horse Lynch Plantation to the kissing gate on the other side. Then follow the path downhill through the hay meadow towards the hedge opposite.
14. Go through the kissing gates across two meadows, sticking to the path that runs through the hedges. Look out for Emperor dragonflies along the way in the summer. You will enter a small field where pipistrelle bats often hunt at dusk. Bear left and you will be back near the reserve entrance you came in, and from where you can make your way back along the path to the Park & Ride.